

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) today announced that the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) has received a \$4.8 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration to fund the purchase of 12 new buses that will run on alternative fuels.

The grant was awarded as part of the FTA "State of Good Repair" program, designed to address the increasing need for bus fleet and facility improvements across the country. A 2008 report by the U.S. Department of Transportation indicated that 18 percent of the nation's bus fleet was in need of replacement.

"This grant is a win-win, providing new buses to our transit system, reducing our need for fuel and lowering our footprint on the environment," said Rep. Farr. "These kinds of investments will pay big dividends down the road, and I'm proud to support this grant program."

METRO will use the funds to replace 12 diesel buses – 10 that were purchased in 1984 and two purchased in 1989 – with 12 new buses that will run on compressed natural gas. The new buses will save 150,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year. In addition, these fleet upgrades will reduce carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere by more than 12,000 metric tons over the life of the buses.

"In addition to helping us reduce our dependence on foreign oil and reduce our carbon footprint, this substantial grant will provide a boost to our plans to convert the entire METRO fleet to CNG," said Santa Cruz County Supervisor and METRO Board Chair Ellen Pirie. "It is most welcome news as we struggle to maintain our high levels of service while facing declining revenues and cuts to state aid."

The federal grant reduces the number of diesel buses to be replaced with alternative fuels vehicles to 30. METRO currently operates a fleet of 120 buses.

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